

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5937

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 15237

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH,UR,VN,XC,JA

SUBJECT: KAPITSA ON SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY. DURING MY OCTOBER 22 CALL ON MIKHAIL S. KAPITSA, CHIEF OF FIRST FAR EASTERN DEPARTMENT MFA (CHINA, KOREA, MONGOLIA) -- AND PERHAPS THE USSR'S LEADING EXPERT ON CHINA -- KAPITSA REVIEWED RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN SINO-SOVIET STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONS. IN SPECULATING ON THE FUTURE SUCCESSION IN PEKING, HIS PERSONAL FEELING WAS THAT CHANG CHUN-CHIAO WILL BE THE EVENTUAL LEADER OF CHINA. KAPITSA ALSO WAXED ELOQUENTLY ALONG USUAL LINES OF THE CHINESE THREAT TO WORLD PEACE AND ON THE DANGERS OF CHINESE EXPANSION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. END SUMMARY.

2. I CALLED ON KAPITSA OCTOBER 22 OT DISCUSS SOVIET RELATIONS WITH ASIA. KAPITSA TOLD ME THAT HE HAD BEEN TRAVELLING IN SIBERIA RECENTLY GIVING LECTURES ON CHINA AS PART OF THE POLITICAL WORK LEADING UP TO THE 25TH PARTY CONGRESS. AFTER THE USUAL PLEASANTRIES, I ASKED HIM FOR HIS VIEWS REGARDING THE ARTICLE IN THIS MORNING'S PRAVDA (SEPTEL) WHIHC SEEMED TO IMPLY A FURTHER DETERIORATION IN SINO-SOVIET STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONS.

3. KAPITSA DISMISSED THE PRAVDA PIECE AS UNIMPORTANT. IT WAS ONLY A "TASS INFORMATION ARTICLE," HE SAID, AND NOTHING OF REAL SUBSTANCE HAS TAKEN PLACE RECENTLY IN SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS. THE SOVIETS HAVE ALREADY SIGNED THEIR TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE CHINESE FOR THIS YEAR CALLING FOR AN OVERALL TURNOVER OF APPROXIMATELY THE SAME AS LAST YEAR'S FIGURE OF 214 MILLION RUBLES. HOWEVER, THIS YEAR WORLD PRICES WERE UTILIZED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN CALCULATING THIS TRADE, WHEREAS IN PREVIOUS YEARS "STOP" PRICES WERE USED. BECAUSE OF THIS, NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN MORE COMPLICATED AND CONTRACTS HAVE ONLY BEEN SIGNED ON APPROXIMATELY FIFTY PER CENT OF THE GOODS TO BE TRADED. WHILE THE RUBLE FIGURE WILL BE THE SAME AS LAST YEAR, THE ACTUAL PHYSICAL AMOUNT OF GOODS TO BE TRADED WILL PROBABLY BE SMALLER BECAUSE OF THE RISE IN WORLD PRICES.

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4. ON THE BORDER TALKS, KAPITSA SAID THAT ILYICHEV HAD RETURNED FROM PEKING AT THE BEGINNING OF MAY AND THAT THE SOVIETS DO NOT KNOW WHEN HE WILL GO BACK, ALTHOUGH HE PROBABLY WILL RETURN WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. THE SOVIET DELEGATION TO THE BORDER TALKS, AS USUAL, REMAINED IN PEKING WITHOUT HIM. BOTH SIDES, KAPITSA SAID, UNDERSTAND THAT THIS PROBLEM CANNOT BE RESOLVED NOW OR IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, BUT AGREE THAT

THIS CHANNEL IS USEFUL AND SHOULD BE PRESERVED.

5. KAPITSA CONFIRMED THE STATEMENT IN THE PRAVDA ARTICLE THAT THE BORDER NAVIGATION TALKS SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE IN CHINA EARLIER THIS YEAR HAVE NOT BEEN CONVENED. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE MIXED COMMISSION ON NAVIGATION MEETS ANNUALLY TO DISCUSS PRACTICAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS DEPTH OF CHANNEL, NAVIGATIONAL HAZARDS, ETC. DURING THE LAST FIVE OR SIX SESSIONS THESE TALKS HAVE BEEN TOTALLY STALEMATED. WE ARE READY TO TALK ABOUT THE PRACTICALITIES, KAPITSA SAID, BUT BEFORE AGREEING TO BEGIN DISCUSSION THE CHINESE INSIST THAT WE MAKE A STATEMENT THAT THE ISLANDS AROUND Khabarovsk BELONG TO CHINA. THIS YEAR IT WAS THE CHINESE TURN TO HOST THE TALKS, BUT THE CHINESE FOR THE FIRST TIME ASSERTED THAT WE MUST AGREE ON AN AGENDA BEFORE THE TALKS CAN BE CONVENED. THEY CLEARLY WANT TO TAKE UP PROBLEMS NOT WITHIN THE COMPETENCE OF THE COMMISSION. OUR POSITION IS THAT WE SHOULD HAVE DISCUSSIONS WITHOUT A FIXED AGENDA, KAPITSA SAID. NEXT YEAR IT WILL BE OUR TURN TO HOST THESE MEETINGS AND WE WILL CERTAINLY GO AHEAD WITH THEM. IN THE MEANWHILE, HE POINTED OUT, NAVIGATION GOES ON UNEVENTFULLY ALL ALONG THE BORDER. THE CHINESE, HE SAID, HAVE BEEN VERY CAREFUL TO AVOID INCIDENTS EVER SINCE THEY GRABBED OUR HELICOPTER CREW.

5. WHEN I ASKED KAPITSA WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN ANY MOVEMENT ON THE HELICOPTER INSIST THAT ALL REFUGEES THAT HAVE STRAYED ACROSS THE BORDERS BE RETURNED BEFORE WE GET OUR HELICOPTER CREW. WE, OF COURSE, CANNOT SEND PEOPLE BACK AGAINST THEIR WILL SINCE THIS WOULD VIOLATE SOVIET LAW. IN FACT, FORCED REHABILITATION OF REFUGEES WOULD BE IN VIOLATION OF CHINESE REGULATIONS AS WELL, CONFIDENTIAL

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HE SAID. IN ANY CASE, THE HELICOPTER CREW IS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT MATTER SINCE THEY HAVE NO DESIRE TO REMAIN IN CHINA. THE CHINESE ARE, OF COURSE, HOLDING THEM FOR POLITICAL REASONS AS A MEANS OF LEVERAGE AGAINST US. WE HAVE ASKED THE CHINESE TO HAND OVER LETTERS AND MESSAGES TO THEM BUT THEY HAVE REFUSED. THEY DO STATE, HOWEVER, THAT THE CREW ARE ALIVE AND HEALTHY.

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AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOSCOW 15237

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

KAPITSA SAID THAT SINCE THIS AFFAIR TOOK PLACE THE

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CHINESE ARE BEHAVING VERY CAREFULLY AND THAT THERE
HAVE BEEN NO INCIDENTS AT ALL ALONG THE SINO-SOVIET

BORDER IN 1975.

6. NOTING THE ILL HEALTH OF CHOU EN-LAI AND THE SECRETARY'S CALL ON MAO YESTERDAY, I ASKED KAPITSA HIS VIEWS CONCERNING THE SUCCESSION IN CHINA. HE CONFIRMED THE SOVIET UNDERSTANDING THAT CHOU WAS VERY SICK AND MAY BE NEAR DEATH. HIS OWN IMPRESSION, KAPITSA SAID, WAS THAT MAO HAD ATTEMPTED TO STRENGTHEN THE EXTREMISTS BEFORE HIS OWN DEMISE BUT THAT THIS ATTEMPT HAD FAILED BECAUSE THE LEFTIST GROUP HAD NO EXPERIENCE IN ECONOMIC OR PRACTICAL AFFAIRS. MAO HAD WANTED TO APPOINT THEM TO KEY POSITIONS IN THE GOVERNMENT BUT THIS HAD NOT BEEN POSSIBLE. IN THE MEANWHILE, THE POSITION OF THE ARMY HAS STRENGTHENED AND MANY OFFICERS WHO WERE BEATEN AND DEGRADED DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION HAVE NOW BEEN REHABILITATED. SOME OF THEM, SUCH AS LO JUI-CHING, WILL NOT BE APPOINTED TO OFFICIAL POSITIONS, BUT EVEN SO THEY WILL POSE A GREAT PROBLEM FOR THE EXTREMISTS. THE QUESTION OF SUCCESSION IS A VERY DIFFICULT PROBLEM FOR THE CHINESE LEADERS, KAPITSA SAID, PROBABLY FAR MORE DIFFICULT THAN IT LOOKS FROM THE OUTSIDE. THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY INTERESTED IN HANDING OVER POWER STRUGGLE, BUT THIS IS NOT SO EASILY DONE. TENG HSIAO-PING, IN ANY EVENT, IS CLEARLY A TRANSITIONAL FIGURE. HE IS TOO OLD. AND IN THE MEANWHILE THE EXTREMISTS CONTROL THE PARTY APPARATUS AS WELL AS POLITICAL WORK THROUGHOUT THE ARMY. THE POLITICAL COMMISSAR OF THE ARMED FORCES, KAPITSA REMARKED, IS A HIGHER AND MORE IMPORTANT POSITION THAN CHIEF OF STAFF. IT IS FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT SOMEONE LIKE TENG WOULD NOT LIKE YAO WEN-YUAN OR WANG HUNG-WEN TO BECOME HIS BOSS. HIS OWN FEELING, KAPITSA SAID, WAS THAT CHANG CHUN-CHIAO IS THE MOST LIKELY FUTURE LEADER OF CHINA. CHANG HAS AN IMPORTANT POSITION IN THE ARMY, THE GOVERNMENT, AND IN THE PARTY. IN ADDITION, HE CONTROLS SHANGHAI AND THIS WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT IN ANY POWER STRUGGLE.

7. KAPITSA SAID THAT IT WAS HIS IMPRESSION THAT THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL OF MISUNDERSTANDING AND ILLUSION ABOUT
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CHINA ON THE PART OF THE UNITED STATES. PEKING, HE SAID, CLEARLY WANTS WAR BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE USSR AND THROUGH THIS MEANS HOPES TO ACHIEVE HEGEMONY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. KAPITSA RECALLED THAT HE PERSONALLY ATTENDED THE OCTOBER 6, 1958, POLITBURO MEETING IN PEKING WITH KHRUSHCHEV AS ONE OF THE TRANSLATORS AND WITH HIS OWN EARS HE HEARD MAO SAY THAT THERE WILL BE AN ATOMIC WAR BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE USSR DURING WHICH CHINA WOULD LOSE 300,000,000

PEOPLE, BUT THAT THIS WOULD NOT MATTER SINCE 400,000,000 CHINESE WOULD BE LEFT TO CARRY ON AND PROSPER. KAPITSA SAID THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE A COMPLETE RECORD OF THAT CONVERSATION.

8. CHINESE POLICY IN THE FUTURE , KAPITSA CONTINUED, WILL BE TO TRY TO MANIPULATE THE CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN WORLD SOCIALISM AND WORLD CAPITALISM AND, LIKE THE WISE MONKEY, SIT ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP AND OBSERVE THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE TWO TOGERS. I DO NOT WANT TO BE A CASSANDRA, KAPITSA SAID, AND THIS IS NOT TROY, BUT VERY SOON YOU WILL BE LOSING THAILAND, BURMA, MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE AND BANGLADESH THROUGH INTERNAL POLITICAL EROSION. THEN CHINA WILL BE ON THE BORDERS OF INDIA RIGHT NEXT TO CALCUTTA. THE CHINESE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING WITH THE SOVIET UNION: WE ARE TOO STRONG, HE SAID, AND "YOU ALSO WOULD NOT LET A SINO-SOVIET WAR TAKE PLACE." (I AGREED THAT WE HAVE NO DESIRE FOR SUCH AN EVENTUALITY.) BUT CHINA WILL HAVE A FREE HAND IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, SINCE IT IS THE WEAKEST PLACE AND JAPAN, INDIA, YOU AND WE WILL HAVE TO DEFEND AGAINST THIS. THERE ARE MILLIONS OF OVERSEAS CHINESE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. PEKING IS WORKING VERY HARD IN BURMA, THAILAND, AND MALAYSIA. MORE CHINESE ARE BEING BORN EVERY DAY IN MALAYSIA. SOON THAT COUNTRY WILL BECOME "CHINESIA." TO PARAPHRASE THE WELL-KNOWN CHINESE STATEMENT ABOUT US, THE CHINESE DEMONSTRATE CONCERN ABOUT THE NORTH, BUT ARE REALLY DOING SOMETHING IN THE SOUTH. WE HAVE DEFINITE STATEMENTS BY MAO TO THIS EFFECT, KAPITSA SAID.

8. COMMENT. KAPITSA WAS AS USUAL ARTICULATE, GOOD
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HUMORED, AND VERY IMPRESSIVE ALTHOUGH HIS GENERAL APOCALYPTIC THESIS REGARDING CHINA AND THINGS CHINESE WAS VERY SIMILAR TO WHAT WE AND OTHERS HAVE HEARD BEFORE FROM HIM. I WILL BE REPORTING HIS REMARKS ON SOUTHEAST ASIA, ASIAN SECURITY, AND SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS IN SEPARATE CABLES.
STOESSEL

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